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*Tea House in the Temple grounds: Nara
Built about 1600*

Early Spring

A Student in Nara

Mr. Langdon Warner has been invited to assist in the work of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art. Mr. Warner was graduated from Harvard with the Class of 1903, and accompanied Professor Raphael Pumpelly in 1904 on the Carnegie Expedition to Chinese Turkestan. To the published report of this expedition, Mr. Warner contributed a report "On the Larger Stone Implements of the Kurgans at Anau," and another "On Skeletons Excavated at Anau." After nearly a year spent in the outskirts of Tokyo with the members of Mr. Okakura's Art Club of Japan (*Nippon-Bijutsuin*) Mr. Warner went to Nara, the ancient capital of the Empire in Yamato Province, and from September, 1907, to December, 1908, was engaged in the study of sculpture. Mr. Niuro, under whose guidance he worked, is a sculptor of reputation in his native country, and has been asked by the Trustees to aid in the installation of the Japanese Department at the new Museum during the coming year.

NARA, the ancient capital of Japan, preserves to-day more relics of early Japanese Buddhist art than any other place. It is little more than a nest of temples and one small museum; but the museum is the richest in the world in sculpture of the Golden Age, and the temples are inexhaustible storehouses of the best things which remain in Japan.

The province of Yamato, of which Nara is now the chief city, was chosen for settlement by the gods themselves six centuries before the Christian era. For this reason the town has a peculiar grace and a flavor of its own in the minds of the Japanese.

Here the emperors reigned till the ninth century, and hither to-day thousands of pilgrims flock to see the colossal Buddha, to ring the huge bell, and to stare with wonder at images of gods made fourteen hundred years ago by sculptors who could do everything but transmit their skill.

Behind the temple of the *Dai Butsu*, or great Buddha, is a half-neglected monastery building, comparatively new, dating back perhaps a century or two. In this it was my fortune to live for a year while studying the early sculpture of Japan.

This monastery, the *Todaiji*, was founded when the city was in its prime—the early part of the eighth century. In the old days a thousand monks

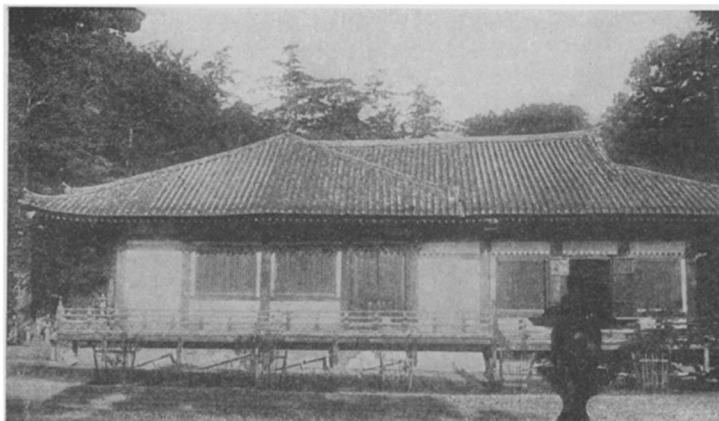
served here and two thousand farmer-tenants, while over them all reigned the Lord High Abbot, with his council of bishops. To-day seven priests and an abbot keep fast and feast days, but the tithes are not brought in, and the tillage from the fields no longer fills the temple granaries.

Within a hundred yards is the *Dai Butsu*, the greatest bronze image in Japan. Three hundred yards further, in the *Sangwatsudo*, are a company of gods who have stood there since the eighth century communing among the shadows. Across a lane and up a flight of granite steps is a little building, seldom opened, where there are five life-sized figures of *Shitenno* made of clay which has held together without baking for over a thousand years.

Everywhere that one walks in Nara are temples, or ruins, or foundation stones of temples, each with its clustering traditions of splendor and of sanctity. Behind the town is the gentle slope of a little grass-grown mountain, which is fired every year in the dark of the February moon by the monks of the



Central Japan



The Sangwatsudo, Nara

two rival monasteries to commemorate the settling of an old boundary dispute. Fires were started from opposite sides, and at their meeting place on the crest was placed the boundary stone. Every one in Japan knows of "Mikasayama," the three-peaked hill, yet it is no higher nor steeper nor more beautiful than a thousand other hills — merely it has stood so long over Nara, and been so often drawn at the top of sacred pictures of the local gods, that, like everything else in Yamato province, it has become holy. In Japan one soon accepts such a fact without question.

Seven miles from Nara is Nara again. Horyuji, the oldest temple building in Japan, has become separated from its mother city by seven miles of rice, growing over palace sites and highways which in the eighth century were thronged.

The monastery was founded in 687 by Shotoku Taishi, and shelters the wall-paintings and the statues vowed by him, dimmer and gentler perhaps than at first, but still tangible and still holy.

The town itself lies half asleep in a perpetual afternoon. About the temple enclosure the streets are flanked by the high tiled walls of priests' houses. Through open gates come glimpses of mossy gardens and pools of octogenarian carp. An old priest will take one about the enclosure and show the Imperial Treasure for a consideration, and surely there is enough there of beauty and antiquity to keep one busy and charmed for half a year.

For a while I contented myself with going once or twice a week from Nara to Horyuji, but soon I found myself spending three days at a time there, sleeping at the village inn, and eating with the monks or with my friends, the sculptors. There was plenty of work to do, measuring, photographing, and taking notes, besides desperately trying to improve my knowledge of the language.

From Horyuji I was taken, as a matter of course, to other small villages among the hills, each with its temple or monastery and its treasures, and before very long was able to go exploring alone. Armed with a card of introduction to the priest, I would present myself, after a morning's walk, at some

tiled gateway, and ask in what Japanese I could muster, to be allowed to come in. It often meant hours of tea-drinking, and a terrible strain on vocabulary and patience, but never once disappointment. For, if there were no statues to measure and photograph and no pictures to examine, there was always a garden to wander through and an old man with a broom to gossip with.

Sometimes one temple meant a week's work of photography and measurement. Two or three times a scaffolding of bamboo poles had to be constructed,

and I sat astride a fragile wand twenty feet in the air, calipers and tape in hand, or tried to reduce the Japanese decimal system to metres, without the aid of pencil and paper. Often we had out the books of manuscript in which were written the temple histories, and had to wade through much curious, half-understood lore and local traditions before we reached anything bearing on the subject we searched.

Thus from month to month the year passes for the student in Japan; when he is not actively engaged on art, he must be at work on the language. There is little encouragement; he is forever behind, he can never speak satisfactorily, — or if he gets to a fair colloquial proficiency, there is a lifetime of memorizing characters ahead of him.

There have been few painters and no sculptors who have given serious attention to the study of Japanese masters. In sculpture this is not strange, because few people have even a suspicion of the



*One of the Deities in the Sangwatsudo
Nara Period (700-800 A. D.)*

simplicity and beauty of the old Buddhist work, and our traditions are so entirely Greek. But in painting, while our artists have not perhaps drunk at the fountain-head, they have at least been given hints of hidden beauties by sight of the color-prints. Whistler and LaFarge admit this, while hosts of others are influenced half unconsciously.

The so-called "Oriental queerness" that so strikes the uninitiated is of course neither necessary nor desirable to copy ; but the more we see the work of Japanese masters, the more we find that they can teach us much in the use of color and of line, but perhaps most of all in the little understood art of arrangement.

It is perhaps not too much to expect that a few years will see Oriental masters in our art schools and Occidental students in theirs. The first that go over will have a hard time to get what they want, because of the language and the manner of life, for there is no "Quartier Latin," with its cosmopolitan population who know the ropes and can give them a hand. If they go into the country they will find no one but the high school teacher who can speak their language, and in all probability the high school teacher will not understand a single spoken word. There will be discouragement on every side, but one may be sure of the help and friendship of the Japanese people wherever he goes.

L. W.

IN THE JAPANESE ROOM, a number of prints, which date from the early eighteenth century,

have been placed on exhibition. They are hand-colored prints ; that is, the colors are not printed from a block, but applied with a brush to the print itself. They are noteworthy as the work of Torii Kiyonobu, Torii Kiyomasu, Okumura Masanobu, and followers of Kwaigetsudo.

Thursday Conferences

The Conference of Thursday, January 28, in the Italian Renaissance Room, by the Rev. Arthur T. Connolly, Rector of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, on "Christian Art as Illustrated in the Baptistry Gates by Lorenzo Ghiberti," was repeated on Saturday morning.

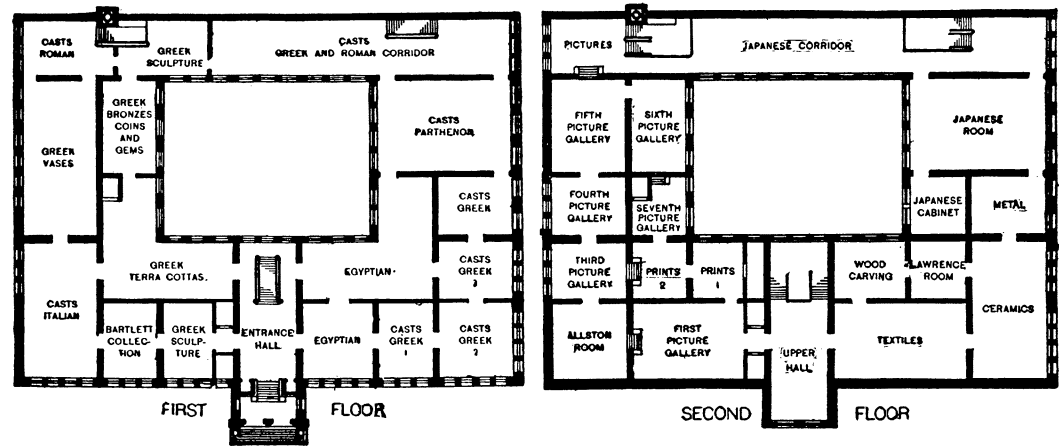
By the courtesy of the Trustees of the Public Library, the Conference of February 4, by Mr. Arthur Fairbanks, Director of the Museum, on "Museum Interiors Abroad," was held in the lecture room of the Library. The remaining Conferences of the series are the following :

Thursday, February 11, in the Japanese Corridor, by Mr. Francis Stewart Kershaw, Keeper of the Collections of Chinese and Japanese Art, on "Japanese Metal Work."

Thursday, February 18, in the Class Room, by Mr. Emil H. Richter, Curator of the Department of Prints, on "Early German Prints."

Thursday, February 25, in the Gem Room, by Mr. Lacey D. Caskey, Assistant Curator of Classical Art, on "Greek and Roman Gems."

Plans of the Galleries



OBJECTS NEWLY INSTALLED

PLACE	OBJECT	SOURCE
Upper Hall	Baptismal font, designed by Charles C. Coveney, executed by Wm. H. Ross & Co.	Lent by Brigham, Coveney and Bisbee.
Fourth Gallery	William M. Chase, Still Life, Fish	Purchased from the Hayden Fund, 1909.
	Edmund C. Tarbell, By the River	Lent by Harry N. Redman.
Textile Gallery	Objects reinstalled since the Barnard Exhibition,	
Case 19	Fragments of Persian rug, fifteenth and sixteenth century	Ross Collection, 1908.
Pottery and Porcelain,		
Case 20	Additions to the collection of Chinese pottery	Anonymous Loan.
Print Rooms	Exhibition of English Stipple prints	Museum Collection.